

DIA review completed

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
10 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

State Dept review
completed.MIDDLE EASTSituation Report Number 21
(As of 2230 EDT)

11/0230Z

THE MILITARY SITUATIONGENERAL

1. After intense ground and air fighting today, the Israelis apparently have reversed the tide of battle against the Syrians, driving them out of Qunaytirah and back toward the 1967 cease-fire line. It is still not clear whether the Syrians have been forced back across the cease-fire line, despite Israeli claims. The Jordanians reportedly are preparing to deploy an armored brigade to Syria, to an area west of Dar'a. At this location, the brigade would not be engaged if the Israelis overran the present Syrian lines, but could act as a buffer between advancing Israeli units and Jordanian territory.

2. On the Egyptian front, the Egyptians appear to be consolidating, and cautiously expanding, their position on the east bank of the canal, possibly in preparation for efforts to advance to the Sinai passes. The Egyptians have apparently launched some small probes into the Sinai but these have been turned back. The Israelis have not, however, initiated major ground action against the main Egyptian forces over the past several days, but continue to harass the Egyptian units with airstrikes.

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25X1

THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

3. The level of ground fighting appears to be reduced, compared to that of the past several days. The Israelis claim to have contained the Egyptians and to have driven to the canal north of El Kantara, relieving an outpost that had held out for five days. While the reports may bolster Israeli morale, the Israeli actions appear, in reality, to be inconsequential. The area where the Israelis claim to have reached the canal is north of the main Egyptian force concentrations and is in an area--characterized by swamps--that probably will not figure significantly in battles for the east bank.

4. Despite the massive infusion of men and materiel onto the east bank over the past five days, the Egyptians apparently have not attempted a strong drive into the Sinai. They appear content to consolidate, and cautiously expand, their newly won positions on the east bank, possibly in preparation for a later advance toward the Mitla and Gidi passes. Thus far, the Egyptians have presented only a frontal target to the Israeli forces, reducing their exposure to the mobile Israeli tactics which routed the Egyptian army in the Sinai in 1967. The Egyptians have, however, launched some smaller probes--probably for reconnaissance--which have been defeated by the Israelis.

25X1

6. The Israelis, after some bloody but apparently unsuccessful counterattacks earlier, have not initiated major ground action against the Egyptian forces. The Israelis are possibly seeking to contain a major Egyptian thrust while awaiting reinforcement from the Golan Heights before engaging the main Egyptian force. The Israeli Air Force has bombed Port Said

25X1

heavily and continues to harass the Egyptian forces in the Sinai. A Western correspondent with the Egyptian force reported the Israeli air attacks were ineffective, however, and that the Israelis did not seem to be making an effort to destroy the heavily defended, easily repaired bridges.

THE SYRIAN FRONT

8. Little fighting is reported along the Golan Heights tonight, after intense battles in the air and on the ground today. In contrast to the 320 Israeli sorties during the daylight hours, only 16 Israeli aircraft flew over southern Lebanon and northern Israel this evening. The Israelis appear to have taken the initiative today and have held Qunaytirah since early morning. It is still not clear whether the Syrians have been forced back across the cease-fire line.

According to UN observers, Syrian forward elements may still be on the Israeli side of the line, however. Prime Minister Meir stated in her evening television broadcast that the Syrian Army was being held east of the cease-fire line.

This location in southern Syria would not be in immediate danger if the Israelis overran present Syrian lines, but the brigade could act as a buffer between the Israelis and Jordan itself. The

25X1

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40th armored brigade has proven its ability in the past and could slow an Israeli attack on Syria through Jordan. Admitting that Jordanian intervention would be a problem, an Israeli military official responding to press questions this evening, stated that at this stage Jordan's involvement would be far less of a problem than earlier.

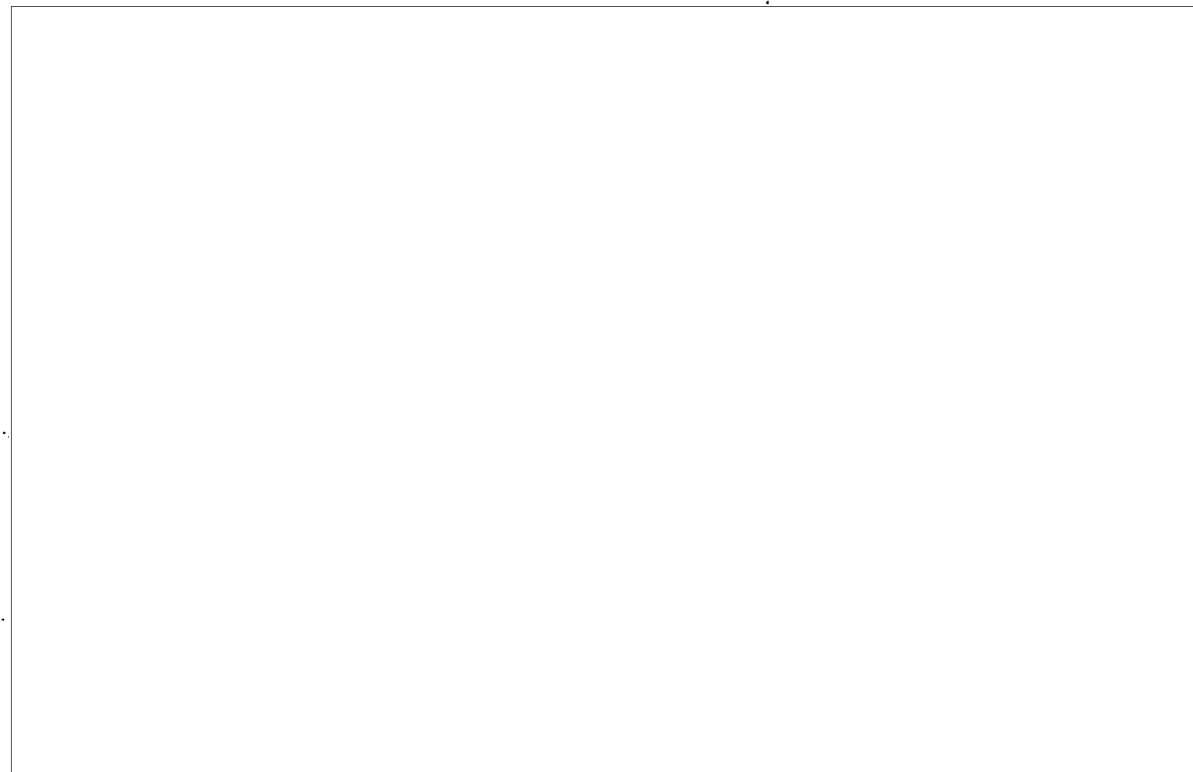
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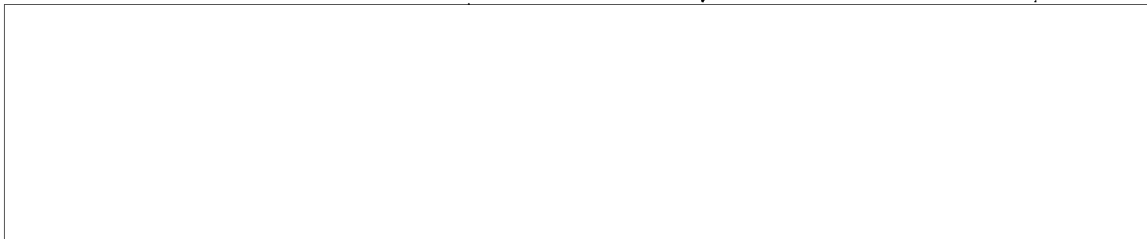
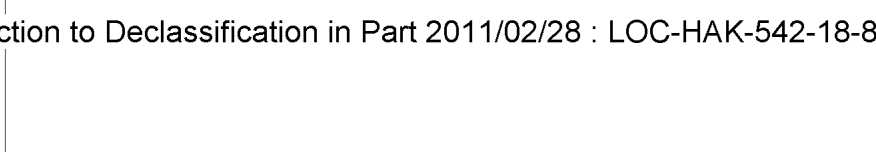
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ISRAEL

13. In a televised broadcast and news conference on 10 October, Prime Minister Meir gave a relatively optimistic account of the military situation. The Prime Minister claimed the Golan Heights were in Israeli hands and that settlers were returning to their homes in the area. The Prime Minister also said that a "basic change" had taken place in the Sinai, with Israeli forces "standing very close to the canal." As for the future, Prime Minister Meir said there was no doubt about victory, but that difficult days were ahead. She urged that King Husayn be "wise enough and responsible enough to keep out of the fighting," reminding him that Tel Aviv had once before--in 1967--asked him not to enter into war with Israel.



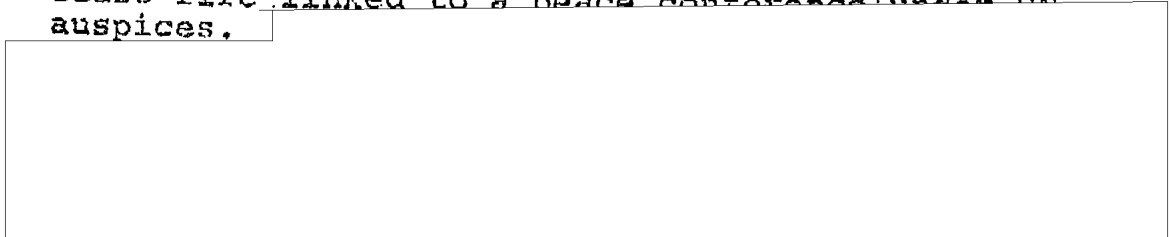


16. In talks with the US ambassador tonight, both the King and the prime minister emphasized that only a cease-fire along present lines could keep Jordan out of the war. In an obvious reflection of their view that such a cease-fire is unlikely, the government today announced that it was calling up reserves and mobilizing all the country's resources for the "war effort."

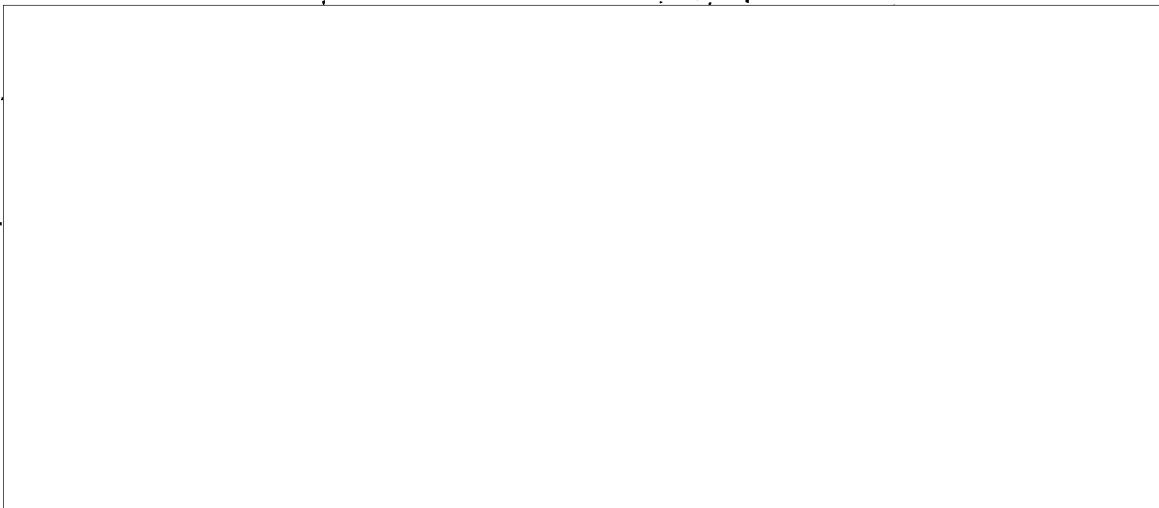
UNITED NATIONS

17. Secretary-General Waldheim has been pushing for the Security Council to reconvene, apparently concerned about the UN's appearance of nonchalance in the midst of war. According to a press report, Waldheim intends to make a personal appeal to the belligerents to end the war, but would probably stop short of a call for a cease-fire. Ambassador Scali does not believe the Security Council will reconvene on 11 October.

18. Nonaligned countries at the UN met this afternoon to discuss the Middle East situation. The session produced only a decision to send messages of support to Egypt and Syria. Radical states wanted to issue an appeal to all nonaligned states to sever relations with Israel, but the move was defeated. Foreign Minister Zayyat of Egypt persuaded the Yugoslavs not to introduce a resolution--which was being drafted on 9 October by some nonaligned countries--that would have called for a cease-fire linked to a peace conference under UN auspices.



25X1

THE CAIRO SCENE

20. The US Interests Section in Cairo reports the city has been virtually normal throughout the day. There was a slight increase in the guard force around the Interests Section, but patrols around the city were described as being at the "normal low level." There are reports of wounded arriving in Cairo and one hotel has already been converted to a military hospital.

21. The Cairo press is carrying many photos of Israeli POWs, but government information policy continues to be to reflect events on the battlefronts in a fairly accurate way and to try to keep excitement at a low level. The media are not speculating about the future. The Interests Section indicates that the US is not a focus of criticism and, for the most part, remains out of the news.

SAUDI ARABIA

22. King Faysal has summoned the ranking US diplomat in Saudi Arabia to a meeting in Riyadh tomorrow morning. The subject of the meeting is not known at this time, but it could be to inform the US that the Saudis intend to send a small military force to the Syrian front and aircraft to Egypt.



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OIL

23. Radio Baghdad called on all Arabs tonight to apply pressure on the governments of Arab oil-producing states to suspend the flow of oil to the US.

24. Oil operations in Saudi Arabia were reported to be on a "business as usual basis" as of 9 October--with the exception of the Tanline, which is running at one-half capacity.

25X1

WEST EUROPEAN REACTION

25. French policy on the Middle East remains pro-Arab, largely for economic reasons. The French Foreign Ministry informed US Embassy officers yesterday that France intends to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis via UN Resolution 242. Paris is persuaded that the great powers, including France, hold the key to this solution.

26. Chancellor Brandt said today that it is an illusion to assume that conflicts in the Middle East can be solved by war. He asked that all states in the Middle East be given the right to exist and appealed to the world powers to work for peace.

27. A Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman denied today that NATO installations in Turkey would be used to intervene in Middle East events. He said these installations are related to the security and defense of NATO regions and would not be used for any other purpose.

25X1

28. The Vatican is disturbed by the renewed fighting in the Middle East, and particularly distressed over the bombing of Damascus. A Vatican official told a US diplomat today that he did not think the Damascus raid was a fair quid pro quo for Syrian missile attacks on Israeli civilians. The Vatican also feels that pressing for a return to the 6 October cease-fire line is likely to be counter-productive in the search to end hostilities.

ANNEX

Soviet Mediterranean Naval Activity

1. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron continues to devote its efforts to gathering intelligence on the Arab-Israeli conflict, watching the US Sixth Fleet, and evacuating Soviet civilians from the area. Most Soviet combatants are located near Crete or in the Aegean Sea.
2. Two Soviet intelligence ships are stationed off the Levant coast to intercept communications of the combatant forces. One is about 60 nautical miles northwest of Tel Aviv, and the other is some 50 nautical miles west of Tartous, Syria.
3. The USS Independence task group, still south of the east tip of Crete, is being trailed by a Soviet submarine tender--the Soviet flagship for the Mediterranean Squadron--and a missile frigate, a destroyer, and an intelligence collection ship. One Soviet destroyer escort is in the Strait of Sicily and two other destroyer escorts plus a Kashin class missile frigate and subtender are in the Gulf of Hammamat. All of these ships are in position to trail the US attack carrier F. D. Roosevelt which was scheduled to depart Barcelona this morning, if it proceeds east. The cruiser and two destroyers that exited the Black Sea this morning are now in the Aegean Sea.
4. A Soviet repair ship that participated in the initial evacuation of Soviet civilian dependents from Alexandria is now back in that port, presumably after having transferred the civilians to another ship. It may be there to evacuate more Soviet nationals. Nine small Soviet naval auxiliary ships and yard craft are also in Alexandria. These ships, a minesweeper near Latakia, and a naval research ship in Sollum, Egypt, are the only other Soviet surface units of any kind known to be in or near any port in the east Mediterranean.

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25X1

5. At least four Soviet diesel submarines have left the Mediterranean en route to their base in the Soviet Northern Fleet, and four or five more are expected to depart soon. These units were relieved by a task force of nine to ten submarines in early October. When the relieving operation is complete, the Soviet submarine force in the Mediterranean will total about nine diesel-powered attack submarines, one diesel-powered cruise-missile submarine, and one nuclear-powered submarine of an undetermined type.

6. Four of the diesel submarines were sighted on 9 October in the central Mediterranean, heading east. At least one of these submarines is apparently now in the eastern Mediterranean, and anti-submarine warfare helicopters from the USS Independence reported a submarine contact near the Soviet flagship this afternoon. The whereabouts of the other Soviet submarines is unknown.

A-2